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ABSTRACT

This 30 to 40 minute drama for elementary school students takes place in and around the Pennsylvania State House, Philadelphia, on September 17, 1787, the day the Constitutional Convention ended. The drama focuses on five major points: (1) the Colonial Confederation's situation at that time, which necessitated calling for such a convention; (2) the existence of the three constitutional plans that were presented; (3) the importance of the Connecticut Compromise to the overall continuation of the convention; (4) the refusal to sign the Constitution of three important delegates and their reasons; and (5) the actual signing of the document and adjournment. The number of characters and staging is left to the discretion of those in charge of the drama's production. While there are 16 speaking parts, this number could be expanded if desired. Most of the drama takes place in one room. How a director may want to arrange the room will depend upon the size of the stage. To assist those selected to act the part of a designated convention delegate, a short sketch of the 16 delegates with speaking parts is included. (JB)

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THE CONSTITUTION:

LITTLE SHORT OF MIRACLE

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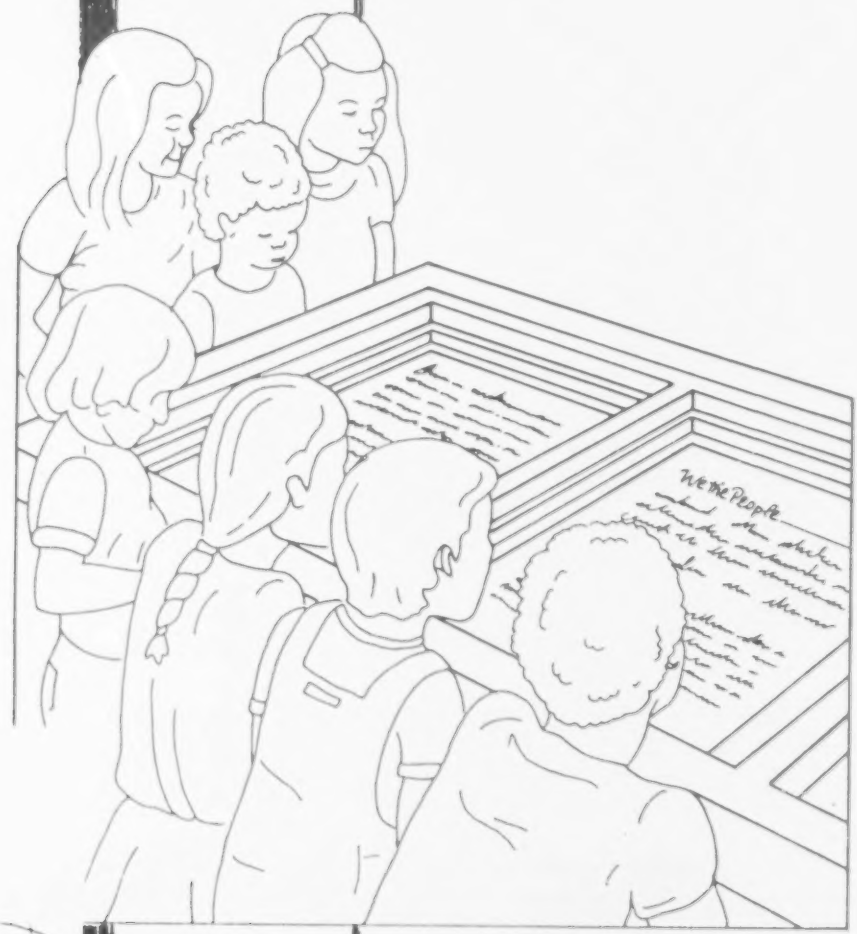

SO 019134

COMMISSION ON THE BICENTENNIAL OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

SEPTEMBER 17, 1987

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THE CONSTITUTION: LITTLE SHORT OF MIRACLE

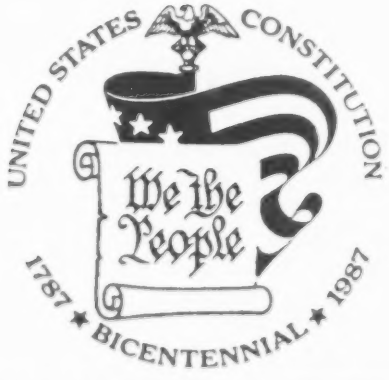
A ONE ACT DRAMA

For Elementary Schools

By

George T. Blume
Extension Specialist
Cooperative Extension Service
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & SU

Grant No. 87-CB-CX-0023



COMMISSION ON THE BICENTENNIAL
OF THE
UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Drama "The Constitution: Little Short of Miracle" was originally written for presentation by middle and high school age youth. Thirty- thousand copies of the drama were printed and distributed free of charge and copyright to high schools across the Nation by the American Legion's National Committee on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution in cooperation with the National Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution. The drama was one of several educational articles in the American Legion's Bicentennial packet which was officially endorsed by the Commission.

Since the play's distribution last spring and its presentation by various groups, nationwide feedback has indicated that elementary teachers were also interested in having the Drama written in a different style for use with their elementary students. Seeing this as a need, the author submitted a proposal through Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University to the Constitution Bicentennial Education Grant Program of the Commission. The proposal was accepted, and through a grant from the Commission, the Drama was rewritten for elementary school students. Its content, style and parts-length was approved by a committee of elementary school teachers. It also received the approval by the Division of Performing Arts at Virginia Tech as an acceptable Drama for presentation at the elementary school grade level.

The author wishes to express his appreciation to the American Legion for the opportunity to write the original script, to the National Bicentennial Commision for their interest in funding the current revision, and to those other important professionals who have assisted with critiquing, editing, and drawings. These colleagues have helped the author create a moment in time which within in a single school assembly period attempts to tell the story of the 1787 Philadelphia Constitutional Convention. This Convention produced the Nation's most sacred document-- the Constitution of the United States.

George T. Blume

About the One-Act Historical Drama

"The Constitution: Little Short Miracle"

This 30-40 minute drama takes place in and around the Pennsylvania State House, Philadelphia, on September 17, 1787, the day the Convention ended with the signing of the Constitution by 39 of the 42 delegates present, representing all states with the exception of Rhode Island who failed to send any delegates.

The drama focuses on five major convention events. First, by making the audience aware of the Colonial Confederation's situation at that time which necessitated a calling for such a convention. Secondly, the introduction and knowledge of the four separate constitutional plans of Randolph (Virginia Plan), Pinckney (South Carolina Plan), Paterson (New Jersey Plan) and Alexander Hamilton's Plan. Thirdly, the importance to the overall continuation of the convention because of the Connecticut Compromise, which called for representing both states and people in the Congressional legislative bodies. Fourthly, the refusal to sign the Constitution by three important delegates: Gerry of Massachusetts, and Mason and Randolph of Virginia, and their reasons for refusal. Fifthly, the actual signing of the engrossed document and adjournment **Sine Die.**

Major references used were:

Scott, E. H. ed. *Journal of the Federal Convention as Kept by James Madison.*

Elliot, Jonathan ed. *The Delegates of the State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution as Recommended by the General Convention at Philadelphia in 1787,* 5 volumes.

Farand, Max *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787,* 4 volumes.

While most speaking parts are simplified and taken from the above references, in some places to explain or add a bit of humor or excitement, some "assumed conversations" were added. This in no way detracts from the actual thought processes of historical significance. The presentation of the South Carolina gavel, which was never used by Washington and never really happened only illustrates the respect the delegates had for the General. Also, some of Washington's remarks, as well as some of Wilson's and Martin's, came either from letters, or from speeches given in defense for or against ratification of the Constitution during debates at their respective State Legislatures. These conversations, however, could have taken place informally or in committee during the convention. One other example, Franklin's remarks towards the end of the drama on why he supported the Constitution and hoped that all others would, were actually handed to Wilson to read, rather than spoken by the 82-year-old sage himself.

The number of characters and staging is left to the discretion of those in charge of its production. While there are 16 speaking parts, this number could be expanded if so desired, thus giving others an opportunity for a small part.

A few of the Convention delegates given speaking parts were not necessarily the most important ones contributing to the success of the convention. Gouverneur Morris, for example, was a very important contibutor. However, since he had a wooden peg leg, he was excluded as one of the speaking delegates for this reason. Robert Morris, who had little or nothing to say, is given a few lines, since he was very rich and had nominated Washington to be president of the Convention.

To assist those selected to act out a designated delegate, a short sketch of the 16 delegates with speaking parts is included. Needless to say, the actors should be clothed in the dress of the period.

Most of the drama takes place in one room of the State House. How a director may want to arrange the room will, of course, depend upon the size of the stage. The suggested spotlighting appears essential to obtain the greatest dramatic effect. Washington's chair is quite famous, and any chair used should have placed on it a rising sun as shown in the illustration. No more than two desks are needed, one for Washington, and the other used by the Secretary, Major Jackson. These, however, should be separated, and Washington's placed on a small dais.

SCENE I

The curtain is completely closed. Bells are ringing and a lot of cheering is taking place. In the center of the stage a sailor is standing near a lamppost with one foot on a box--just looking around. (see page 4A).

From stage left many of the play's characters appear, talking and laughing in small groups, passing the sailor on their way to City Tavern. (Washington, Hamilton, Randolph, Mason, Pinckney, Patterson, Gorham and others).

As they walk by the sailor, bells and background shouting continues, for the Constitutional Convention is over, and the people in Philadelphia are in a joyous and happy mood. The sailor inquisitively observes the delegates as they pass by and go off by way of stage right. The bells and noise gradually cease.

Then from stage right two Philadelphians appear talking to themselves as they approach the sailor. The sailor can hold his inquisitive nature no longer and inquires about the celebration.

SAILOR: EXCUSE ME SIR, BUT WHAT IS GOING ON HERE IN PHILADELPHIA?

1st PHILA: YOU HAVE NOT HEARD? --- THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION HAS JUST ENDED. THE DELEGATES ARE ON THEIR WAY TO CITY TAVERN FOR REFRESHMENTS.

SAILOR: WHAT CONSTITUTION? I'VE BEEN AT SEA. MY BOAT JUST DOCKED YESTERDAY. THIS IS MY FIRST DAY ON SHORE.

At this time, Dr. Franklin and James Madison appear from stage left, talking to themselves as they move to stage right. The 2nd Philadelphian sees Franklin, and asks about the Convention. Franklin answers him, but does not stop. As he and Madison journey towards the Tavern to join the others.

2nd PHILA: OH! OH! HERE COMES DR. FRANKLIN AND MR. MADISON! WELL DOCTOR! WHAT HAVE WE GOT! A REPUBLIC OR A MONARCHY?

FRANKLIN: A REPUBLIC IF YOU CAN KEEP IT!

2nd PHILA: THANK YOU SIR, THANK YOU!

SAILOR: SAY, LET'S JOIN THEM AT CITY TAVERN. ON THE WAY YOU CAN TELL ME EVERYTHING THAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE I LEFT PORT 11 MONTHS AGO.

The trio walk slowly towards stage right stopping now and then as they speak.

1st PHILA: WELL THERE WAS THE ANNAPOLIS MEETING THAT FAILED. ONLY 5 STATES SHOWED UP. THEY DID ASK CONGRESS TO APPROVE ANOTHER CONFERENCE TO MAKE CHANGES IN THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION.

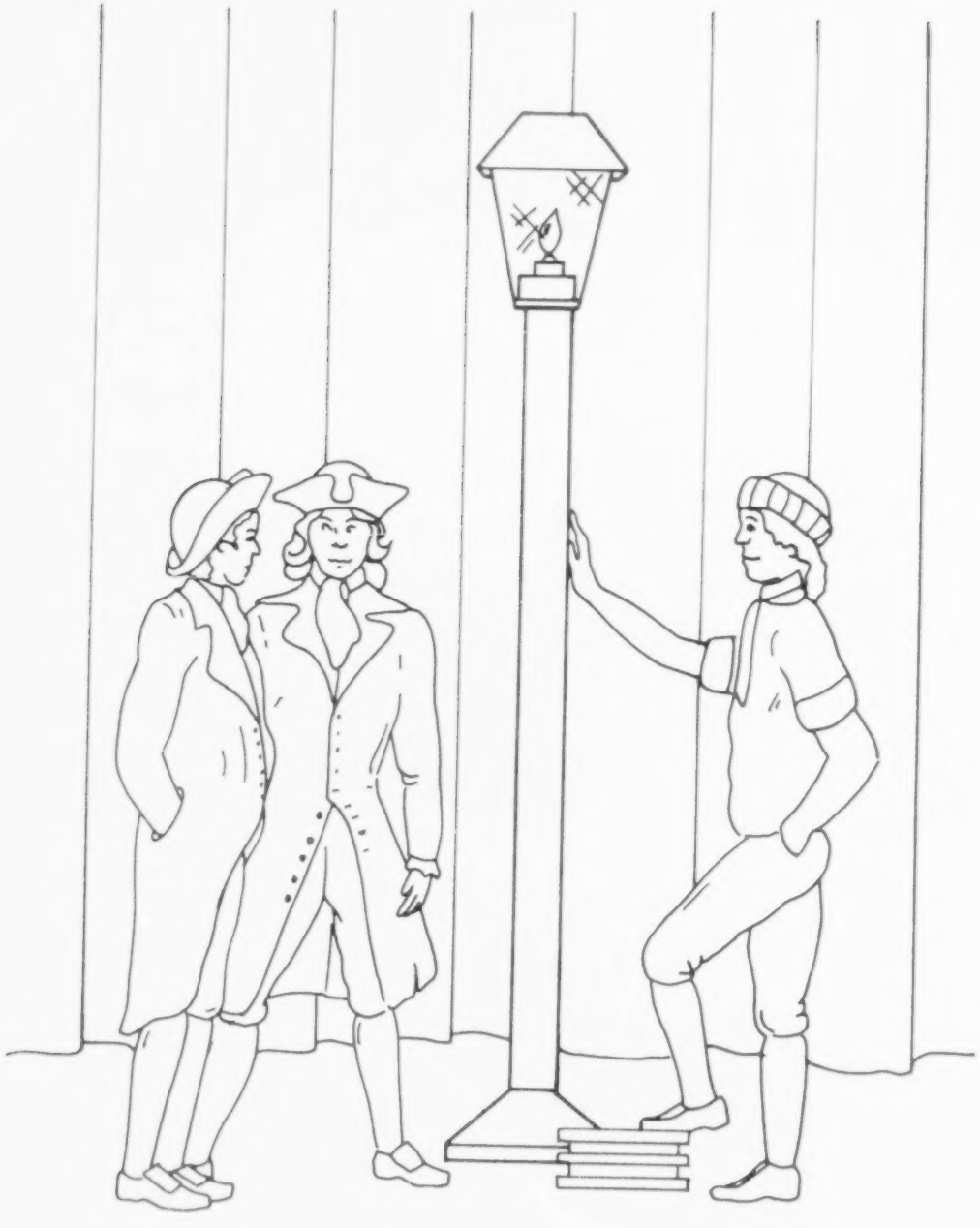
2nd PHILA: SINCE CONGRESS DID NOT WANT OTHER REBELLIONS LIKE CAPTAIN SHAYS'S HAPPENING, THEY AGREED TO HOLD THIS CONVENTION. DELEGATES FROM ALL STATES EXCEPT RHODE ISLAND HAVE MET HERE SINCE MAY 25th.

SAILOR: WHAT WENT ON DURING THE CONVENTION?

1st PHILA: NO ONE REALLY KNOWS. EVERYTHING WAS LOCKED UP. ALL THE WINDOWS WERE COVERED. WE PICKED UP SOME NEWS FROM THE TAVERN. WE BELIEVED VIRGINIA HAD A PLAN. MR.MADISON HAD BEEN WORKING ON SOMETHING-- AND MAYBE OTHER STATES HAD PLANS TOO.

As the actors disappear, the stage lights are turned off, and a stagehand removes the lamppost and box.

SCENE I



SCENE II

The curtains are partially opened, James Madison, Edmund Randolph, George Washington, John Blair and George Mason are grouped around a table, some standing some, sitting. The room is not well lighted. (see page 5A) Madison speaks.

MADISON: GENTLEMEN, WE ALL KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CONVENTION. THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION DO NOT WORK. THEY HAVE NOT HELPED US TO BECOME A STRONG NATION.

BLAIR: THE NATION IS IN DEBT. MANY STATES DO NOT HELP SUPPORT THIS NATION. THE CONGRESS HAS NO POWER. MANY CONGRESSMEN DON'T EVEN ATTEND. WE CAN'T EVEN PASS LAWS.---

MASON: AND MANY OF OUR STATES STILL ARGUE OVER BOUNDARIES. NINE STATES SUPPORT THEIR OWN NAVY. SOME STILL MAKE THEIR OWN MONEY AND I HEAR VERMONT IS ATTEMPTING TO MAKE A SEPARATE TREATY WITH GREAT BRITAIN.

WASHINGTON: WE ALL AGREE SOMETHING HAS TO BE DONE. MR. MADISON, I HEAR YOU HAVE A PLAN.

MADISON: I DO SIR. WHILE WAITING FOR THE OTHER STATE DELEGATES TO ARRIVE I HAVE PREPARED A STRONG NATIONAL PLAN.

BLAIR: I GUESS SOUTH CAROLINA WILL OFFER A PLAN. SOME SMALL STATE LIKE MARYLAND AND NEW JERSEY MIGHT PRESENT ONE. I'M SURE **(Blair looking at Washington)**, GENERAL, THAT HAMILTON WILL COME UP WITH SOMETHING. **(Washington nods).**

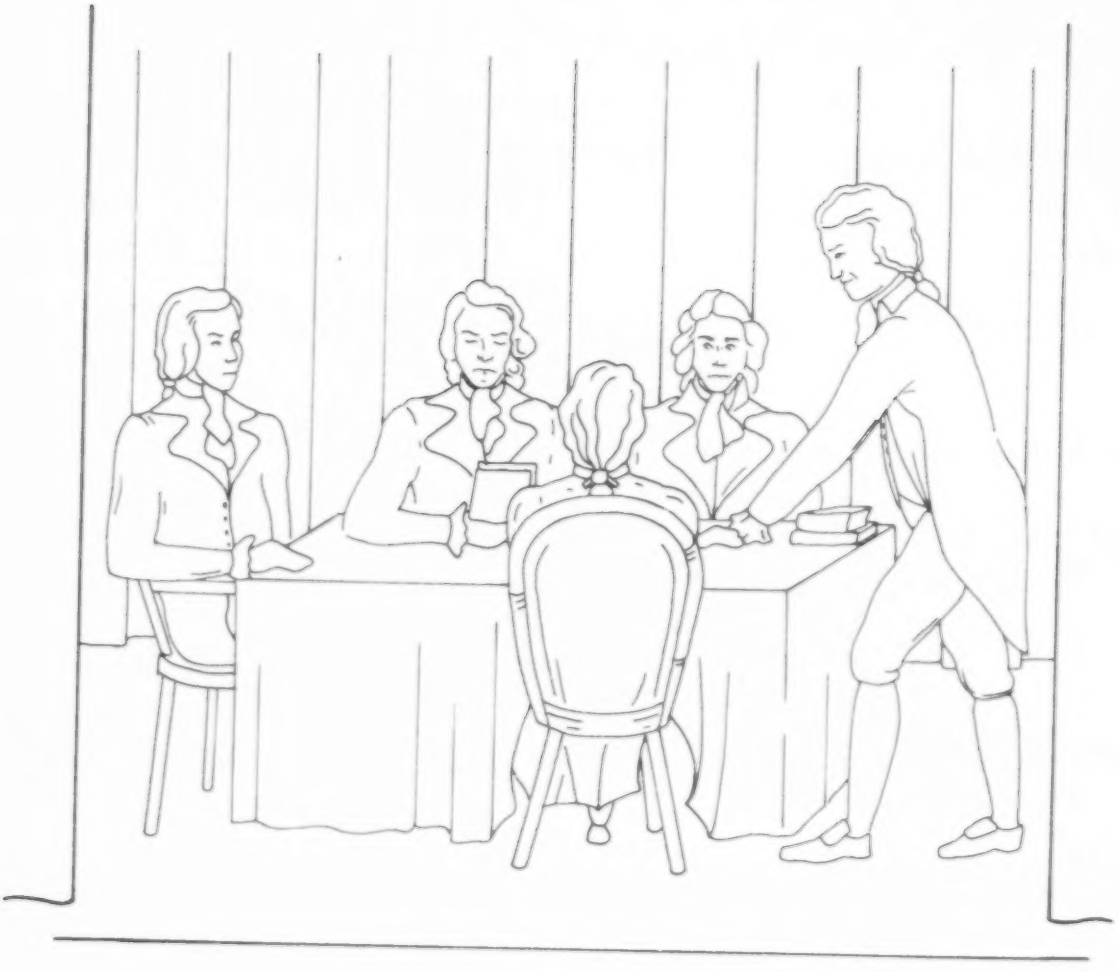
RANDOLPH: WHAT DO YOU WANT THE VIRGINIA DELEGATION TO DO?

MADISON: LET US GO OVER THE PLAN TOGETHER. SINCE MY VOICE IS WEAK, I FEEL OUR PLAN WILL HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF BEING ACCEPTED IF GOVERNOR RANDOLPH PRESENTS IT.

RANDOLPH: UNTIL TOMORROW THEN---

MADISON: UNTIL TOMORROW-- WHEN 13 INDEPENDENT STATES START FORMING A SINGLE NATION UNDER A NEW NATIONAL CONSTITUTION. **The curtain is drawn.**

SCENE II



SCENE III

The three actors continue their walk towards City Tavern, entering from stage left.

SAILOR: WELL, I GUESS ALL THE IMPORTANT PEOPLE WERE HERE.

2nd PHILA: NO, NOT REALLY, THOMAS JEFFERSON IS IN PARIS. JOHN ADAMS IS STILL IN LONDON. JOHN JAY WAS NOT EVEN INVITED, AND PATRICK HENRY TURNED DOWN THE OFFER. HE SAID HE SMELT A RAT.

SAILOR: WAS GENERAL WASHINGTON ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE CONVENTION?

1st PHILA: YES, HE WAS.

As the actors reach stage right, the curtain opens. All the delegates are seated. The president's desk is on a small platform slightly above floor level unoccupied. The secretary's desk is to the left of Washington's desk. Scenery can be of walls and covered windows. However, at some place in the scenery there should be a door leading off stage. James Madison is seated in the middle (see sketch page 9A). Washington is to his right and Randolph to his left. Robert Morris and John Rutledge are counting ballots at the president's desk.

MORRIS: GENTLEMEN, GENERAL WASHINGTON HAS BEEN ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THIS CONVENTION. PLEASE ALLOW THE HONORABLE JOHN RUTLEDGE AND MYSELF TO ESCORT OUR PRESIDENT TO HIS CHAIR.

Rutledge and Morris walk to the Virginia delegation, and together they escort Washington to his chair. All the delegates are standing and clapping. On the back of Washington's chair is a painting of a rising sun. (see page 9B).

As soon as Washington sits down, all the delegates take their seats.

Washington then stands.

WASHINGTON: MR. MORRIS, MR. RUTLEDGE, DELEGATES, THANK YOU FOR THIS HONOR. I'VE NEVER BEEN IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS. PLEASE FORGIVE ME FOR ANY MISTAKES I MIGHT MAKE. WITH GOD'S HELP I HOPE TO GUIDE THE BUSINESS OF THIS IMPORTANT CONVENTION.

WE ALL KNOW THAT OUR ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION DO NOT WORK. WE MUST DECIDE NOW TO BE ONE UNITED NATION UNDER ONE GOVERNMENT OR THIRTEEN INDEPENDENT NATIONS ALWAYS FIGHTING ONE ANOTHER. WE NEED A STRONG CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT OUR LIVES, LIBERTIES AND PROPERTIES. WE MUST ACT NOW!

The delegates stand and clap and while the clapping continues, Charles Pinckney III addresses the chair and approaches Washington's desk giving him a Gavel and returns to his seat.

PINCKNEY: MR. PRESIDENT-- LET ME GIVE YOU THIS GAVEL, I THOUGHT, BECAUSE OF MY YOUTH AND VIGOR I MIGHT HAVE BEEN ELECTED TO

YOUR CHAIR. **(Laughter from the delegates)** I DON'T THINK I WILL HAVE ANY USE FOR IT NOW. **(Laughter continues).**

WASHINGTON: THANK YOU FOR THE GAVEL AND WISE DECISION MR. PINCKNEY **(More laughter from the delegates).**

PATTERSON: MR. PRESIDENT, SINCE WE WILL BE MEETING AS A COMMITTEE, MAY I SUGGEST THAT MR. GORHAM OF MASSACHUSETTS SERVE AS THE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN.

WASHINGTON: VERY WELL, MR. GORHAM WILL YOU NOW TAKE CHARGE?

Washington leaves the chair and Gorham waits until Washington is seated in the Virginia Delegation and then takes his seat.

RANDOLPH: (Randolph Standing) MR. CHAIRMAN

GORHAM: GOVERNOR RANDOLPH

RANDOLPH: I HAVE A PLAN THAT WILL CORRECT OUR WEAKNESSES. IT WILL MAKE OUR NATION STRONG AND SECURE. THIS PLAN WILL TAKE AWAY SOME OF THE POWERS OF THE STATE. IT WILL GIVE THESE POWERS TO THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT. IT WILL BE CONTROLLED BY THE PEOPLE. THE CONGRESS WILL BE MADE UP OF A HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND A SENATE. THE NUMBER OF CONGRESSMEN ELECTED DECIDED BY THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN THE STATE. I WOULD HAVE A PRESIDENT CHOSEN BY CONGRESS. I WOULD HAVE A GOOD SYSTEM OF JUDGES. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO SEE AN EXECUTIVE AND JUDICIAL BRANCH SET UP HAVING A VETO POWER OVER THE CONGRESS.

PINCKNEY: (Rising form his seat) MR. CHAIRMAN

GORHAM: MR. PINCKNEY

PINCKNEY: MR. RANDOLPH'S PLAN AND THE ONE I HAVE TO OFFER ARE ALMOST THE SAME. I SEE NO NEED TO REPEAT THEM. LET ME GIVE MY PLAN TO THE SECRETARY, **(Pinckney walks over to the secretary's desk)** FOR HIM TO SEND TO THE PROPER COMMITTEE.

GORHAM: THANK YOU MR. PINCKNEY

As a champion for states rights, Patterson is upset with Randolph's and Pinckney's plan. He presses his point hard and strong and boisterous. He accentuates his points with swinging arms and fists.

PATTERSON: MR. CHAIRMAN! MR. CHAIRMAN!

GORHAM: MR. PATTERSON

PATTERSON: THE VIRGINIA AND SOUTH CAROLINA PLANS DON'T BELONG HERE. WE NEED NO NEW CONSTITUTION. ALL WE NEED IS TO CORRECT THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION AND NOTHING MORE-- NOTHING MORE!

MY NEW JERSEY PLAN IS IN KEEPING WITH THE PURPOSE OF THIS CONVENTION. IT IS WHAT THE PEOPLE WANT! ANY NEW PLAN WILL DESTROY THE RIGHTS OF THE SMALLER STATES. MOST AMERICANS FEEL THAT GIVING MORE POWER TO CONGRESS WOULD SATISFY EVERYONE. THEREFORE, I SUGGEST WE GO ABOUT CORRECTING THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION. LET US FORGET ABOUT THESE OTHER PLANS. LET US CARRY OUT THE ONLY TASK WE WERE SENT TO DO-- AND THE ONLY PURPOSE OF THIS CONVENTION!

The delegates begin to talk among themselves about what Mr. Patterson has said. While they talk, Alexander Hamilton rises from his seat and ask for recognition by the chairman.

HAMILTON: MR. CHAIRMAN!

GORHAM: COLONEL HAMILTON

HAMILTON: I DON'T LIKE THE NEW JERSEY PLAN. NO AMMENDMENTS TO THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION CAN MAKE IT WORK. I DON'T LIKE THE VIRGINIA PLAN EITHER. BOTH PLANS WOULD RUIN OUR NATION.

I LIKE THE BRITISH FORM OF GOVERNMENT. I WANT A STRONG CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. THEREFORE, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE A PRESIDENT ELECTED FOR LIFE. HE WOULD ALSO HAVE THE POWER TO VETO ALL BILLS. I WOULD HAVE ONE HOUSE OF CONGRESS ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE FOR THREE YEARS AND THE OTHER ELECTED BY THE HOUSE FOR LIFE. CONGRESS WOULD HAVE THE POWER TO PASS ALL BILLS. LASTLY, WE MUST GET RID OF ALL STATE LAWS THAT CONFLICT WITH NATIONAL LAWS.

(Hamilton becomes a little cocky, and he begins to strut a bit at his seat and continues talking) I MUST SAY MY PLAN AND THE VIRGINIA PLAN DO NOT INVOLVE STATES RIGHTS AND PEOPLE TO THE DEGREE AS THE NEW JERSEY PLAN. BUT MOST PEOPLE SOON GET TIRED OF TOO MUCH DEMOCRACY-- AND WHAT MORE IS THE VIRGINIA PLAN, BUT THE SAME OLD PORK WITH A NEW BOTTLE OF CATSUP.

WILSON: **(Wilson jumping to his seat and pointing his finger at Hamilton.)** NO! NO! NEVER. NEVER.

(All the delegates get restless and begin to add to the confusion)

MARTIN: **(Martin gets up about the time Wilson is through with his comments)** WHERE ARE THE STATES RIGHTS! YOU HAVE TAKEN AWAY THE RIGHTS OF THE STATES.

(The noise continues)

GORHAM: **(Taking the Gavel raps on the desk to restore order. He raps again and speaks).**

GENTLEMEN, PLEASE-- GENTLEMEN, PLEASE TAKE YOUR SEATS. THANK YOU. THANK YOU FOR YOUR THOUGHTS AND PLAN COLONEL HAMILTON.

WILSON: **(Rising form his seat)**MR. CHAIRMAN

GORHAM: MR. WILSON

WILSON: I HAVE LOOKED AT BOTH THE VIRGINIA AND NEW JERSEY PLANS. THE VIRGINIA CALLS FOR TWO BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT. THE NEW JERSEY PLAN ONLY ONE. THE VIRGINIA PLAN WANTS POWER TO COME FROM THE PEOPLE; WHILE THE NEW JERSEY SEEKS POWER FROM THE STATE. THE VIRGINIA PLAN CALLS FOR A SINGLE PRESIDENT WHILE THE NEW JERSEY PLAN SEEKS MORE THAN ONE. A SMALL NUMBER OF LEGISLATORS CAN ACT IN THE VIRGINIA PLAN, WHEREAS IN THE NEW JERSEY PLAN A SMALL NUMBER CAN CONTROL. THE VIRGINIA PLAN ALLOWS REMOVAL OF THE PRESIDENT BY IMPEACHMENT. WHEREAS YOU CAN REMOVE THE PRESIDENT IN THE NEW JERSEY PLAN ONLY UPON THE REQUEST BY A MAJORITY OF STATES. AND LASTLY, WHILE THE VIRGINIA PLAN ALLOWS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF STATE COURTS, THERE ARE NO SUCH PROVISIONS FOUND IN THE NEW JERSEY PLAN.

JOHNSON: (Johnson stands and addresses the chair) MR. CHAIRMAN

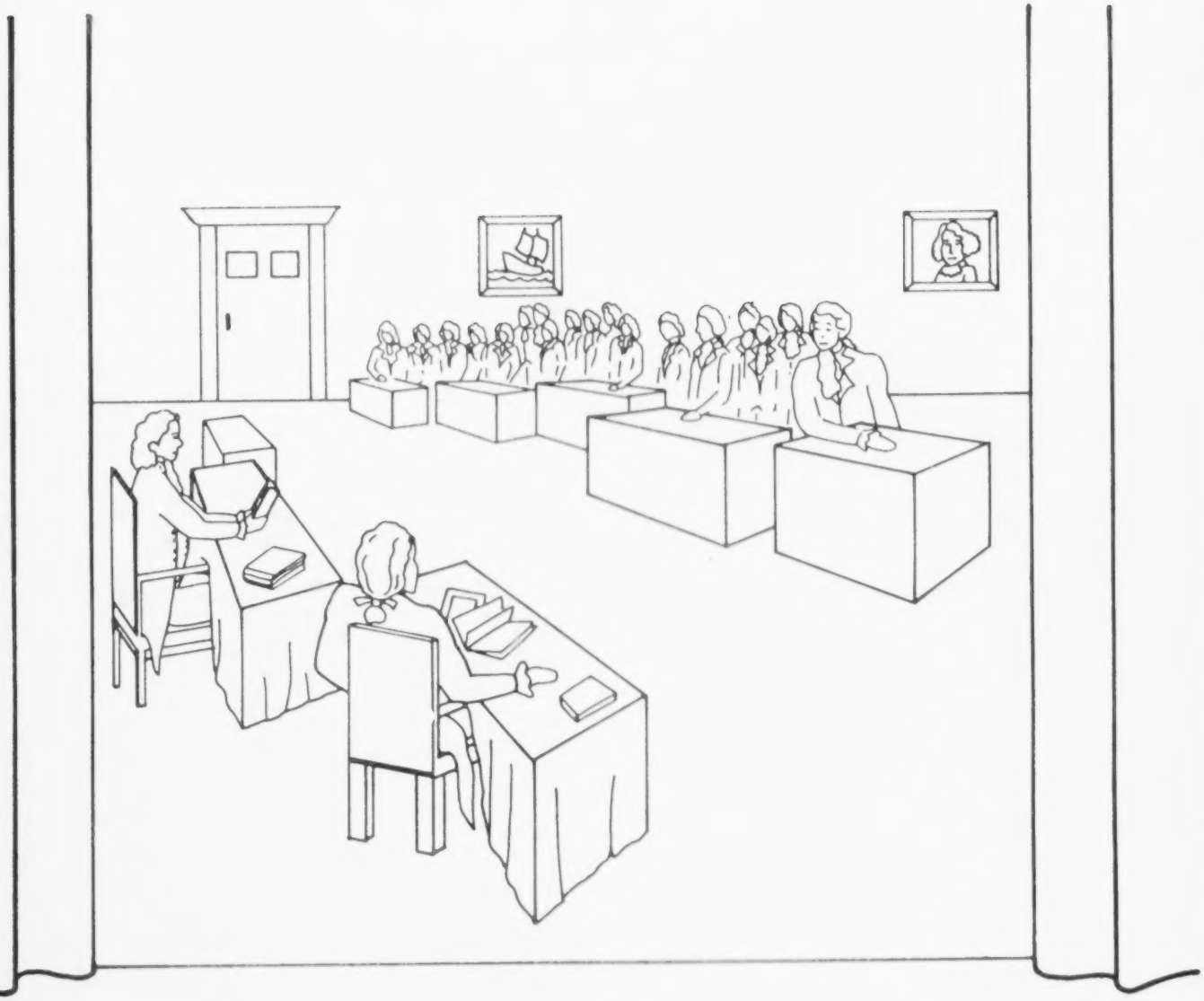
GORHAM: DR. JOHNSON

JOHNSON: IT APPEARS TO ME THAT THE NEW JERSEY PLAN FAVORS A STRONG STATE GOVERNMENT. THE VIRGINIA PLAN SEEKS A STRONG NATIONAL GOVERNMENT. MR. HAMILTON'S PLAN HAS BEEN PRAISED BY ALL BUT HE HAS NO SUPPORT. WHEN I STUDY ALL THE PLANS BEFORE US, I LIKE THE VIRGINIA PLAN THE BEST.

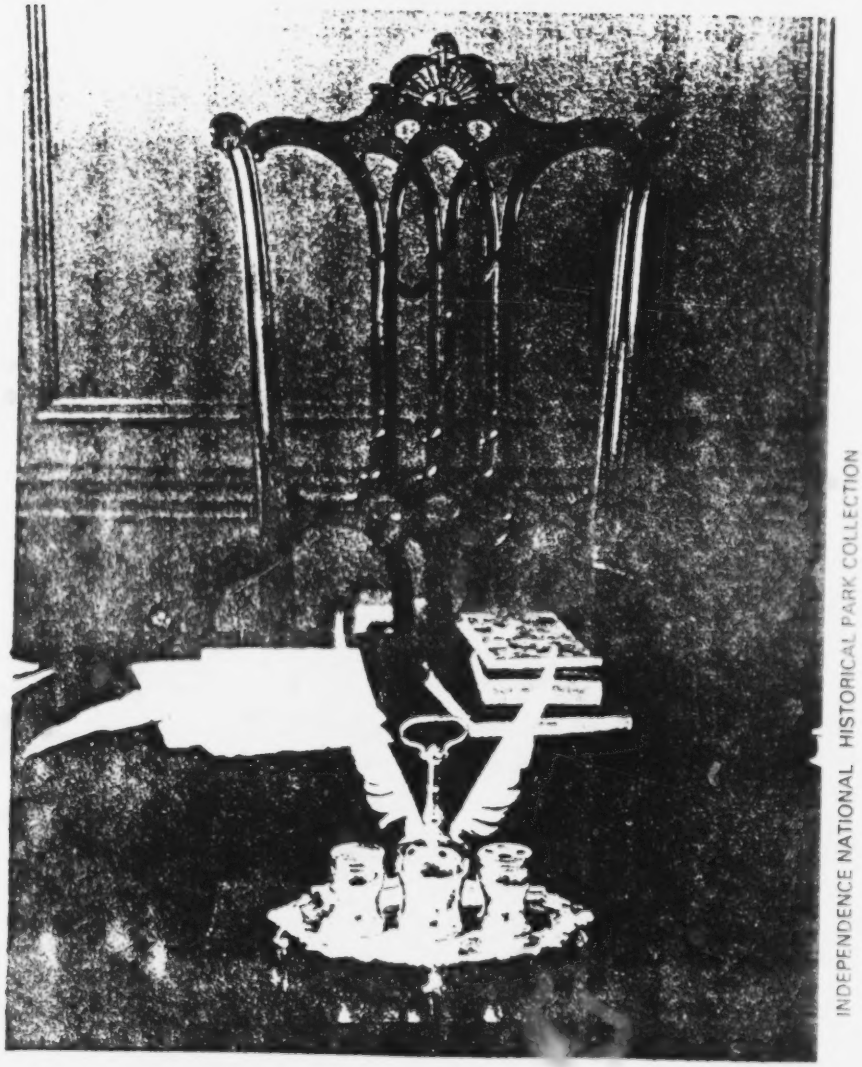
WILSON: **(Wilson rises without being recognized. He is excited and his words get louder as he concludes his remarks)** OUR PEOPLE EXPECT US TO FORM A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT-- I SUPPORT THE VIRGINIA PLAN! I ALSO SUPPORT THE MOTION BY MR. MORRIS THAT WE MUST AGREE ON A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT WITH A STRONG CONGRESS, A PRESIDENT, AND A GOOD COURT SYSTEM!

The curtain closes

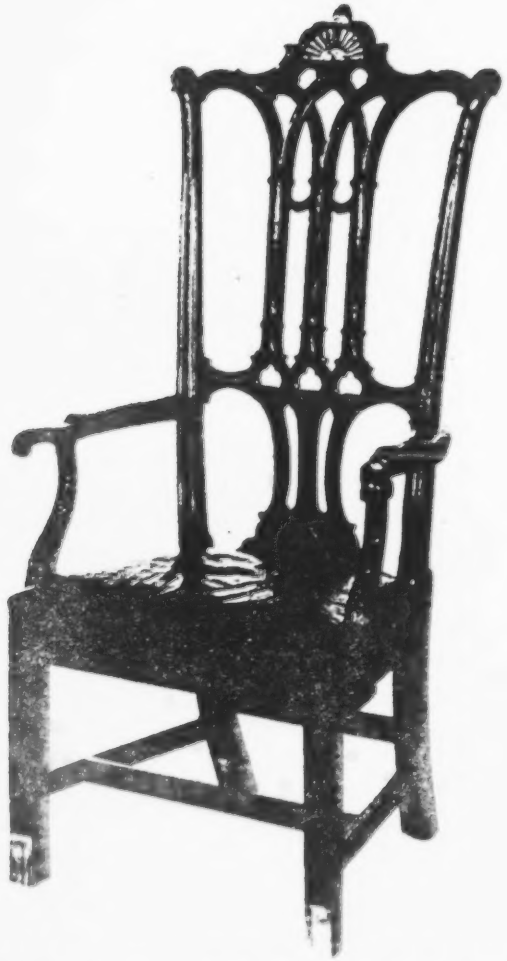
SCENE III



THE PRESIDENT'S CHAIR



INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK COLLECTION



INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK COLLECTION

"Dr. Franklin, looking towards the president's chair, at the back of which a rising sun happened to be painted, observed to a few members near him, that painters had found it difficult to distinguish in their art a rising sun from a setting sun. I have, said he, often and often in the course of the session and the vicissitudes of my hopes and fear as to its issue, looked at that behind the president without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting. But now at length I have the happiness to know that it is a rising and not a setting sun."

Madison's Notes, September 17, 1787

SCENE IV

Our three Tavern travelers continue on their journey, appearing from stage left.

SAILOR: WERE THERE ANY SERIOUS ARGUMENTS OR COMPROMISES MADE?

1st PHILA: THERE MUST HAVE BEEN. ESPECIALLY ON THE PROBLEM HOW THE CONGRESS WOULD BE ORGANIZED.

2nd PHILA: YOU KNOW THAT VIRGINIA, MASSACHUSETTS AND NEW YORK ALL WANTED MORE OF THEIR PEOPLE IN CONGRESS BECAUSE OF THEIR SIZE, POPULATION, AND MONEY. I'M ALSO SURE THAT THE SMALL STATES LIKE NEW JERSEY AND MARYLAND ALL FOUGHT HARD FOR EQUAL REPRESENTATION.

Our actors are at this time just to the left of center stage. At far stage right, Dr. Johnson appears standing in a spotlight. With Patterson and Madison who have joined with Johnson are seated. The sailor and two Philadelphians stop and listen to Dr. Johnson on the Great Compromise which saved the Convention from failure.

JOHNSON: I WOULD LIKE TO REMIND THIS CONVENTION AND YOU SIR! **(Pointing to Mr. Patterson)** THAT THIS NATION IS MADE UP OF PEOPLE AND THEIR INTERESTS. AND TO YOU SIR, **(now pointing to Mr. Madison)** THAT OUR NATION IS MADE UP OF SEPARATE STATES AND THEIR INTERESTS. I RECOGNIZE BOTH. SINCE THEY BOTH WORK TOGETHER, BOTH SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED IN CONGRESS. IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THE PEOPLE OUGHT TO BE RECOGNIZED. IN THE SENATE THE STATES SHOULD ALL BE EQUAL. I AM IN FAVOR OF THIS COMPROMISE. **(see sketch page 10A).**

The spotlight fades and our sailor and friends continue their conversation as they proceed to stage right.

SAILOR: DID ALL THE DELGATES STAY?

1st PHILA: NO. SOME LEFT AND RETURNED. OTHERS LEFT FOR GOOD. I PERSONALLY SAW JOHN MERCER AND LUTHER MARTIN OF MARYLAND PACK UP AND LEAVE ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO. **The group now reached stage right and disappear from sight.**

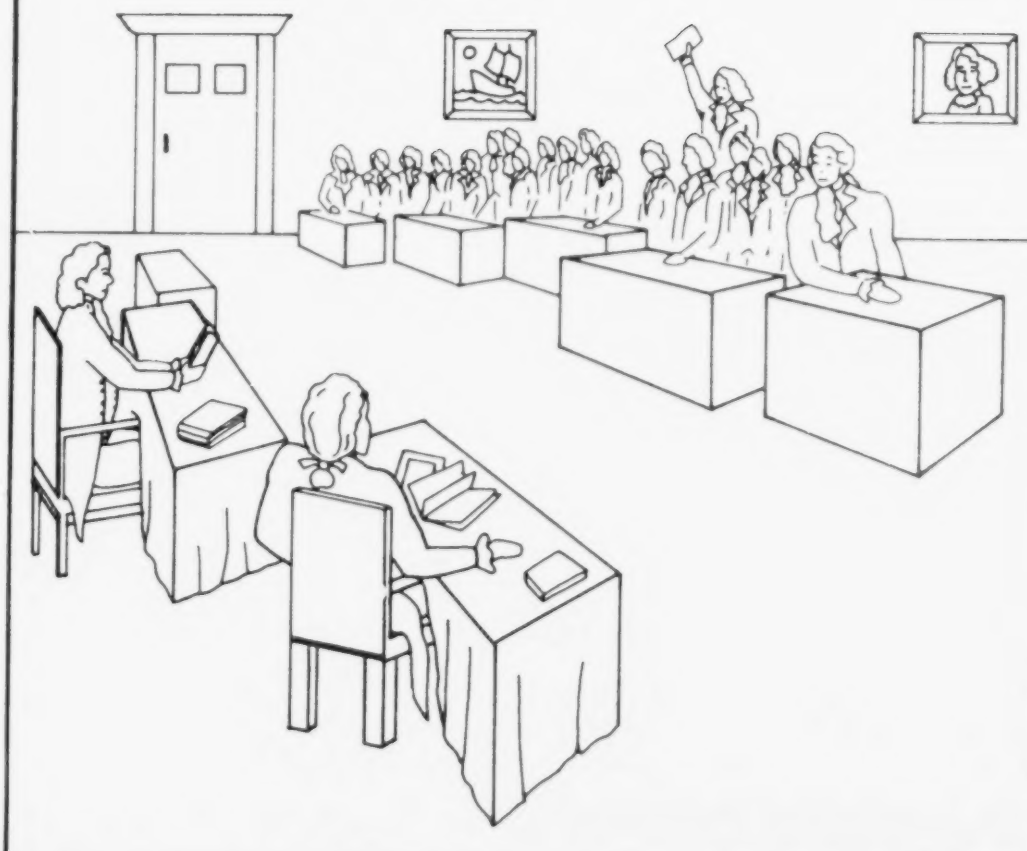
SCENE IV

SCENE V

The curtain rises with all the delegates in their respective places. Mr. Gorham is still chairman. Luther Martin stands and begins to speak. (See page 11A).

MARTIN: SIRS, WE EACH WERE SENT HERE TO MAKE CHANGES IN THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION. THIS WE DID NOT DO! DO YOU REMEMBER OUR FIRST RESOLUTION? IT STATED THAT WE CORRECT THE ARTICLES. NOW-- NOW LET ME READ TO YOU THE RESOLUTION YOU HAVE FINALLY DECIDED UPON. **(Martin picks up a piece of paper and reads).** RESOLVED THAT A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT OUGHT TO BE ESTABLISHED. GENTLEMEN, WHAT WE HAVE DONE IS ALL WRONG. WE HAVE FAILED IN OUR TASK. I, THEREFORE, PLAN TO DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO SEE THAT THIS-- **(picking up papers)** THIS CONSTITUTION IS DEFEATED!-- I HEAR I AM NEEDED AT HOME-- I BID YOU GOODBYE! **Martin leaves. The delegates hiss, boo, and holler as the curtain is drawn.**

SCENE V



SCENE VI

Our Tavern travelers appear at stage left and remain there until the curtain opens and then disappear at stage left.

SAILOR: I GUESS ALL THE DELEGATES SIGNED THE CONSTITUTION.

1st PHILA: WELL, NOT ALL. WE HEARD THAT THREE REFUSED TO SIGN.

SAILOR: WHY?

The curtain opens. Mr. Gorham still occupies the president's chair.

(see sketch page 9A)

GERRY: MR. CHAIRMAN

GORHAM: MR. GERRY

GERRY: GENTLEMEN, I WANT TO SIGN THIS DOCUMENT BUT I CAN'T. I FEAR IF I SIGN, IT MIGHT BRING ON A WAR WITHIN MY OWN STATE. SINCE THIS CONSTITUTION WILL NOT SOLVE MY STATE'S PROBLEM, I CANNOT PUT MY NAME TO IT. YOU SIR, MR. CHAIRMAN, MAY SIGN BUT I CANNOT.

MASON: MR. CHAIRMAN

GORHAM: MR. MASON

MASON: WE SPEAK OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS, BUT NOWHERE IN THIS CONSTITUTION DO I FIND THEM STATED. AS THE CONSTITUTION IS NOW WRITTEN, I CANNOT GIVE IT MY SUPPORT HERE OR BACK IN VIRGINIA.

RANDOLPH: MR. CHAIRMAN

GORHAM: GOVERNOR RANDOLPH

RANDOLPH: MY FRIENDS, EVEN THOUGH I ARGUED FOR THIS PLAN, I CANNOT NOW SUPPORT IT. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE AMMENDMENTS OFFERED BY THE VARIOUS STATES. THEN AT ANOTHER CONVENTION TO CORRECT AND SEND TO THE CONGRESS, A CONSTITUTION REVISED BY ALL STATES. UNTIL THIS IS DONE I CANNOT SUPPORT IT. I ALSO FEEL THAT NINE OF THE 13 STATES WILL NOT APPROVE THIS CONSTITUTION.

PINCKNEY: MR. CHAIRMAN

GORHAM: MR. PINCKNEY

PINCKNEY: SIR, I AM AGAINST HOLDING ANOTHER CONVENTION. IT'S HARD TO GET PEOPLE TO AGREE. IF WE FAIL TO SUPPORT THIS CONSTITUTION, WE MAY LATER ON, HAVE TO DECIDE THE FUTURE OF THIS REPUBLIC BY THE SWORD.

GORHAM: I THANK YOU MR. PINCKNEY. GENERAL WASHINGTON, WILL YOU PLEASE RETURN TO THE CHAIR?

Washington leaves the Virginia Delegation and takes his place as president of the convention. Gorham sits with his Massachusetts Delegation.

WASHINGTON: GENTLEMEN, IT APPEARS TO ME LITTLE SHORT OF MIRACLE THAT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MEET TOGETHER AND DEVELOP THIS CONSTITUTION. THE PLAN ISN'T PERFECT, BUT WE DO HAVE WAYS TO MAKE ANY CHANGES. I SUGGEST WE NOW SIGN. AS THE SECRETARY CALLS YOUR STATE PLEASE COME TO HIS DESK.

FRANKLIN: GENERAL WASHINGTON! **(Franklin rises from his seat without any formal recognition from the chair)** I ADMIT I DID NOT LIKE SOME PARTS OF THIS CONSTITUTION. LATER ON, HOWEVER, I MIGHT AGREE WITH THEM. HAVING LIVED SO LONG, I CAN REMEMBER THOSE TIMES I THOUGHT I WAS RIGHT, AND LATER ON I FOUND I WAS WRONG. I AGREE WITH THIS CONSTITUTION WITH ALL ITS FAULTS, IF THERE ARE ANY, BECAUSE WE NEED A STRONG GOVERNMENT. I REALLY DON'T THINK ANY OTHER CONVENTION COULD WRITE A BETTER ONE. I THINK THIS PLAN WILL SURPRISE OUR ENEMIES WHO THINK WE ARE WEAK, AND THAT OUR STATES ARE ALL WAITING TO CUT EACH OTHERS THROATS. THUS, I CONSENT SIR, TO THIS CONSTITUTION, BECAUSE I EXPECT NONE BETTER, AND BECAUSE I AM NOT SURE THAT IT IS NOT THE BEST.

WASHINGTON: THANK YOU DR. FRANKLIN. MAJOR JACKSON, WILL YOU CALL FOR THE STATES?

MORRIS: MR. PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON: MR. MORRIS

MORRIS: SIR, WOULD YOU GIVE THIS CONVENTION THE HONOR BY BEING THE FIRST TO SIGN THIS HISTORIC DOCUMENT.

Jackson brings the paper and pen over to Washington's table and Washington with pen in hand rises from his seat looks at the paper, then up to heaven and then to the delegates and speaks.

WASHINGTON: SHOULD THE STATES TURN DOWN THIS CONSTITUTION I DON'T THINK WE WILL EVER BE ABLE TO DO IT AGAIN PEACEFULLY. THE NEXT TIME WILL BE AS A RESULT OF WAR! **(Washington signs and takes his seat).**

JACKSON: CONNECTICUT **(delegates rise and sign it).**

The number of delegates signing will depend on the size of the stage. Some delegates may sign three or four times, if necessary. The correct number of signing by state are given after each state. The correct number by state need not sign. This will depend on the amount of time allowed for the total production.

JACKSON: MASSACHUSETTS (2)

NEW JERSEY (4)

DELAWARE (5)

NEW YORK (1)

HAMILTON: GENTLEMEN, MY IDEAS WERE VERY DIFFERENT THAN WHAT IS IN THIS PLAN. I WILL HAVE A HARD TIME GETTING MY PEOPLE TO ACCEPT IT, BUT I'M SURE IT CAN BE DONE.

JACKSON: VIRGINIA

Madison and Blair proceed to the table to sign. Mason and Randolph stand at their seats and speak.

MASON: SIR! ONLY IF MY STATE VOTED FOR THIS PLAN COULD I SIGN MY NAME. FOR THEN AND ONLY THEN WOULD I KNOW I HAD THE SUPPORT OF MY STATE GOVERNMENT, AND MY PEOPLE.

RANDOLPH: I DON'T MEAN BY NOT SIGNING THAT I AM AGAINST THE PLAN. I HAVE WORKED HARD FOR A STRONG GOVERNMENT. I MUST THINK MORE ABOUT THIS PLAN. I MUST, I MUST MAKE UP MY MIND HOW I WILL VOTE ON IT WHEN I GET BACK TO VIRGINIA.

Madison and Blair wait until Mason and Randolph finish, and then return to their seats.

JACKSON: SOUTH CAROLINA (4)

PINCKNEY: GENTLEMEN! IF THERE WERE MORE SPACE ON THIS PAPER, I WOULD LIKE TO SIGN MY NAME LARGER THAN JOHN HANDCOCK'S ON THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

Laughter from the delegates

JACKSON: GEORGIA (2)

NORTH CAROLINA (3)

MARYLAND (3)

NEW HAMPSHIRE (2)

PENNSYLVANIA (8)

WILSON: MY FRIENDS, OUR GOAL WAS TO PRODUCE A NATIONAL CONSTITUTION. A CONSTITUTION THAT WOULD HAVE MANY GOOD QUALITIES OF GOVERNMENT AND NO BAD QUALITIES. THIS CONSTITUTION WILL MAKE US A POWERFUL NATION. IT WILL BRING PEACE, FREEDOM, AND HAPPINESS TO THE PEOPLE OF AMERICA.

JACKSON: GENERAL WASHINGTON, THIRTY NINE DELEGATES FROM ALL THE STATES HAVE SIGNED THEIR NAMES ON THE CONSTITUTION.

WASHINGTON: THANK YOU MAJOR JACKSON. THE EVENT IS NOW IN THE HANDS OF GOD! IF THERE IS NO FURTHER BUSINESS, I NOW DECLARE THIS CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION ADJOURNED, AND SUGGEST WE MEET AT THE CITY TAVERN.

MORRIS: AND I EXTEND TO ALL TO BE MY GUEST, AND EAT HEARTILY.

PINCKNEY: WELL, AT LEAST, MR. MORRIS, WE KNOW THAT SOME OF YOUR MONEY WILL GO FOR A GOOD CAUSE.

Laughter from the group as they talk among themselves and leave through the stage door. All the delegates leave except Madison and Franklin. Madison is collecting his notes when Franklin addresses him.

FRANKLIN: OH, MR. MADISON, DO YOU HAVE A MINUTE BEFORE WE JOIN THE OTHERS AT THE CITY TAVERN?

MADISON: FOR YOU SIR, I WILL SPEND AS MUCH TIME AS YOU WILL ALLOW ME.

FRANKLIN: DID YOU NOTICE THE RISING SUN PAINTED ON THE BACK OF GENERAL WASHINGTON'S CHAIR? IT WAS HARD TO SAY WHETHER IT WAS A RISING SUN OR A SETTING SUN. MANY TIMES AS WE TALKED ON DIFFERERNT TOPICS, I LOOKED AT THAT CHAIR. I WAS NEVER SURE IF THE SUN WAS RISING OR SETTING. NOW I AM HAPPY TO SAY YES--IT IS A RISING SUN RATHER THAN A SETTING SUN.

MADISON: DR. FRANKLIN, AS GOD HAS AIDED US IN OUR TIMES OF NEED, WE MUST BELIEVE HIS HAND HAS GUIDED US IN WRITING THIS CONSTITUTION!

As Dr. Franklin and Madison go out the door the curtain is drawn. At stage right a prop door with City Tavern written above it is placed. Our sailor and the two Philadelphians appear at stage left walking slowly towards the tavern door.

SCENE VII

1st PHILA: WELL, THATS THE STORY OF THE CONSTITUTION AS BEST WE KNOW IT.

SAILOR: COME! LETS JOIN THEM IN THE TAVERN.

As the actors walk towards the tavern door, America the beautiful is softly played, and a voice repeats the preamble to the Constitution. The music increases in volume. The actors time their arrival at the tavern door about the same time the voice finishes the preamble. As they pass through the door, the music growing louder all the time, concludes and the stagelights dim and finally darken. (See sketch page 16A).

"WE THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES, IN ORDER TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION, ESTABLISH JUSTICE, INSURE DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY, PROVIDE FOR THE COMMON DEFENSE, PROMOTE THE GENERAL WELFARE, AND SECURE THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY TO OURSELVES AND OUR POSTERITY, DO ORDAIN AND ESTABLISH THIS CONSTITUTION FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA."

SCENE VII

CHARACTER SKETCHES OF THOSE DELEGATES WITH SPEAKING PARTS IN THE ONE-ACT DRAMA

(To Assist in Casting)

JAMES BLAIR, JR: About 55 years of age. highly respected, but only active in the Virginia Caucuses. Never spoke during the convention, was uncertain in his approach to independence, and was not always in agreement with the Virginia plan. Known for his gentleness and strict attention to dress.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: 82 years of age. Greatest philosopher of the age; highly respected. Is more of a reducer of tension between points under discussion than contributor. Always has a story to tell to lighten up the situation, also soothed hurt feelings. Probably gave more assistance to delegates during informal chats than during the Convention.

ELBRIDGE GERRY: 37 years of age. Gentleman in all situations, wealthy merchant. Hesitating speaker and at times finds it difficult to put across a specific point, yet is knowledgeable about the subject. Is not afraid to defend a position which may differ from the majority. Negative attitude on points, not in agreement with. Failed to sign the Constitution.

NATHANIEL GORHAM: About 49 years old, a vigorous active participant in debates. Of lusty agreeable and pleasing manner. Was in favor of a strong central government, even though he did not expect the union to survive.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON: 33 years of age. Served under Washington. Small in size and thin, classy dresser. Stiff in manner; a very proud person. Lacks a strong voice and oratory ability. Thinks things through thoroughly and analytically and when speaks, tries to force points across. Knowledgeable in the field of law.

WILLIAM JACKSON: Officer under Washington. Got position probably because of solicitation for the job. Kept notes, but not the satisfaction of Madison.

DR. JOHNSON: About 60 years of age. Has nice personality-- no temper, has affectionate style of speaking to delegates. Is no orator, and voice tone makes people uncomfortable. Intellectual, and well respected for legal knowledge. Thorough in presenting points of view based on study. Dignified.

JAMES MADISON: About 37 years of age. Easy to get along with and has an agreeable style. Modest, yet people accept his greatness. Profound politician, scholar, but not an orator. Leader of the Convention, best informed of all Convention delegates. Twice elected to Congress and always considered one of its ablest, probably the ablest to ever sit. Probably most knowledgeable of any person in the Union on Affairs of the Country.

LUTHER MARTIN: 34 years of age. Well educated, possesses a great amount of information. Actions tend to make people angry. Does not speak well, long winded and at times loses train of thought. Is argumentative, sour, pigheaded. Strong states righter. Favors Confederation rather than Constitution. Left before Convention ended.

GEORGE MASON: About 60 years old. Speaks with knowledge of experience and accomplishments. Strong in character, able and convincing when debating. Stands behind convictions. Strong advocater for Bill of Rights. Did not sign Constitution.

ROBERT MORRIS: About 50 years old. A merchant of great wealth. Not a scholar as others in attendance, but just as great. Possesses an energetic mind, second to none. Was not a college graduate.

WILLIAM PATERSON: About 34 years of age. Smallest in size of all the delegates. A person of great modesty, happy, polite. Not an extremist, but did develop an alternate to the Virginia Plan. Excellent orator and speaks only when thoroughly knowledgeable of the debate question. Was praised by all the delegates for his disposition.

CHARLES PINCKNEY: 24 years of age, the youngest delegate. Shows great promise, extremely knowledgeable. Very polite and respectful of others. Hard worker, served in Congress. Speaks clearly and meaningfully, not wasting words.

EDMUND RANDOLPH: 32 years of age. Polished gentleman, scholar, and statesman, hard worker, governor of Virginia. Fine voice, good physique, a natural to present the Virginia Plan. Was Washington's aid-de-camp during the war. Did not sign Constitution.

GEORGE WASHINGTON: 55 years of age. Strong determined-- highly respected, gentleman. Placed by peers above the average man. Does not have to speak to scold a person; only needs to look and the individual gets the message. When speaking, no one else speaks or whispers. Friendly, but still a bit distant (no one calls him George). More a statesman than politician. A physically large individual.

JAMES WILSON: About 45 years old. Very forceful due to reasoning ability, but no great orator. Understands human nature. Knowledgeable of political institutions of the world-- past and present and uses this knowldege. Ranks among the best in legal and political knowledge. None more clear, copious or comprehensive.

DEFINITIONS OF SELECTED DRAMA WORDS

BOUNDARIES - shows one what is owned, such as a piece of property. Like our separate states, your yard has boundaries of what is yours, and what is your next door friends.

COMMITTEE - a small group of people selected from a larger group to carry out a task the larger group has asked them to do.

CONFLICT - to be against or opposed to a rule or a set of rules or laws.

CONSTITUION - a written set of accepted rules that determines how a groups or a nations will be run.

CONVENTION - a meeting of a group of like interested people to carry out a specific task or tasks, or to conduct business and activities for the welfare of the larger group or organization.

DELEGATES - members of a subgroup who are given the power to suggest and make rules and carry out policies during a meeting of a Convention for the good of the larger Convention group of which they are also members.

DEMOCRACY - as used by Alexander Hamilton meaning freedom.

DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY - seeing that one's home and all that the person does are things the individual enjoys without fear of anyone or the government ever taking them away.

EXECUTIVE - a branch of the government headed by the president.

IMPEACHMENT: the removal from office by actions taken by the legislative branch (the House and Senate) of government.

JUDICIAL - the legal branch of government. The Supreme Court, and other Federal Courts make up this branch.

LEGISLATORS - persons who are elected by the separate states to serve in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

MONARCHY - a form of government ruled over by a King or Queen.

NATIONAL PLAN - a plan that considers the good for the nation over the good for the state.

ORDAIN - the language used by the Constitutional delegates meaning to establish something.

POSTERITY - keeping things of value to pass on to future generations of Americans.

REBELLION - an act of open resistance and even open fighting against the government.

REPUBLIC - a form of government where the power is kept in the hands of its citizens rathers than held by one or a group of individuals.

TREATY - an agreement usually between two or more nations on matters such as peace or trade.

VETO - the power a person has been given to prevent some type of action to take place. Like the president not giving his OK to a Bill that the Congress passed.

WELFARE - as used in the Preamble of the Constitution, meaning a condition where all the citizens are happy and doing largely what they enjoy doing.

Meaning of Selected Drama Phrases

"DECIDE THE FUTURE OF THE REPUBLIC BY THE SWORD" If the 13 states refused to join together peacefully at this time, they might eventually wind up fighting each other which did happen in 1861-1865 over slavery and economic conditions.

"SMELT A RAT" An expression used by Patrick Henry which today would be about the same as there is something fishy going-on.

"THE SAME OLD PORK WITH A NEW SAUCE"(Catsup) Hamilton means that the Virginia Plan is not anything new, but an old plan, with few new points added to it.

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION The first Constitution agreed upon by the thirteen independent states and finally adopted in 1781. It had little power and consequently, the nation was weak and had little power to enforce any laws which were passed.

GREAT COMPROMISE The agreement that saved the convention from failure. Members of the House were to be elected based on population numbers and in the Senate, based on the same number (2) from each state.

We the People